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INTELLOFAX 35

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Country: USSR

Subject: Alleged Use of New Rocket guns and Thermal Shells at Artillery Maneuvers in the Molodechno Oblast

Place Acquired:

Date Acquired: 50X1

Date of Info: 14-16 March 1953

Source:

1. "Large scale artillery maneuvers were conducted in March 1953 at the artillery testing ranges at Pabrade (northeast of Vilna in the Lithuanian SSR) and at Asmena (formerly Oszmiany, Poland) [not in NIS Gazeteer] in the Byelorussian SSR.

2. "The maneuvers tested new types of rocket launchers with which a newly formed division of motorised artillery had been equipped. These rocket launchers, or rathe rocket guns, are of two types. One type of launcher is mounted on a German Panther [sic] tank. The other is mounted on a separate platform towed by a caterpillar tractor. Both types are loaded with shells filled with explosives and some kind of thermal substance, which creates a very high temperature after explosion. 50X1

3. "At the artillery range at Pabrade, between 14 and 16 March, sharpshooting was conducted with these heavy rocket guns at a distance of 17 to 18 kilometers. Many soldiers were severely scalded by the shells filled with the new thermal substance. These shells after explosion scatter around many small containers of the thermal substance. Each container starts to burn and propagate a very high temperature.

4. "About 300 to 350 badly scalded soldiers were brought in to the military hospital in Vilna on 16 March following accidents on these maneuvers".

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